

Subject: Science

Grade: Fourth

Standard: #4 The Living Environment

Key Concept: For any particular environment, some kinds of plants and animals survive well, some do not survive well, and others cannot survive at all.

Generalization: Animals are adapted to a particular environment.

Background:

This lesson is part of a unit on different environments. Students have studied the basic needs of animals and are familiar with vocabulary such as niche, survival of the fittest, environment, biome, and food chain.

Students are placed in tiers according to their interest in a particular environment. The teacher may let students have free-choice as to environment, or the teacher may choose to pre-select specific environments and have students choose from those. The number of tiers will equal the number of choices. This lesson is illustrated with three tiers.

This lesson is tiered in *content* according to *interest*.

Tier I: *The Desert*

Tier II: *The Ocean*

Tier III: *The Tundra*

Each group should make a chart listing names of various animals that live in each environment across the top and characteristics/needs of the animal down the side. Examples are: movement, body covering, number of eyes, number of ears, number of legs, type of food eaten, how they get water, shelter and body temperature. I would suggest ten animals per group, more if students are able.

Once the chart is completed, each student should choose two animals to research and study in-depth. Once the chart and the in-depth studies are completed, have students come together in a large group for sharing.

Assessment:

Teacher observation during the group work as well as individual interviews will serve as assessment. Have each group share the information on their charts as well as the in-depth studies of the different animals. Have students compare and contrast the animals in the different environments. Lead them in a discussion of how animals are adapted. Ask if a specific animal (prairie dog, for example) could live in a different environment (ocean). Have them give reasons for their answers.

The charts and in-depth studies are a nice transition to the concept of the five kingdom classification system. Students can work in groups to classify the animals they studied.